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ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

for the Year ended 31st December, 1945.

To Thetford Urban District Council.

Gentlemen,

I beg to submit my Annual Report for the year 1945 as follows:—

SECTION A.—STATISTICS AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE AREA.

Area—7096 acres.

Registrar-General's estimation of the population at mid-year—4,260.

Number of inhabited houses according to the rate book—1,293.

Rateable Value—£20,565.

Sum represented by a penny rate—£82. 9s. 2d.

The district is partly Rural and partly Urban. In the urban area the industries are Patent Pulp manufacturing, motor engineering, malting and chemical manure manufacturing, fruit canning, the preparation of coffee, and general trading. There is in addition as a result of the war an R.A.O.C. repair centre which employs mainly female labour. In the rural area agriculture and general estate work are predominant. Sugar beet and forestry employ men and women in their season.

This year having seen the end of hostilities the town of Thetford emerges from the war in a state of overcrowded dwellings and having a rising birth rate and in a state of having under staffed utility services, the main examples being the scavenging and conservancy services, also the gas and electricity services. Building and repair organisations are also in difficult position. There are still some evacuees in the town but they are mainly those who have no home to return to as a result of enemy action in their own cities.

Vital Statistics.

			Total.	M.	F.	
Live Births	Legitimate	...	73	38	35	Birth Rate per 1,000 of the population —19.2.
	Illegitimate	...	9	6	3	
Still Births	...	...	4	1	3	Rate per 1,000 births—48.7.
Deaths	...	...	62	30	32	Death Rate per 1,000 population—14.5.

Deaths from Puerperal causes (Headings 29 and 30 of the Registrar-General's short list)—

No. 29 Puerperal Sepsis	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	Nil.
No. 30 Other Puerperal causes	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	Nil.
Total	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	Nil.

Death Rate of Infants under one year:—

All Infants per 1,000 live-births	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	24.3
Legitimate per 1,000 legitimate live-births	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	27.3
Illegitimate per 1,000 illegitimate live-births	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	Nil.

Deaths from Cancer (all ages)	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	12
„ „ Measles (all ages)	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	Nil.
„ „ Whooping Cough (all ages)	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	Nil.
„ „ Diarrhoea (under 2 years of age)	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	Nil.

These figures are on the whole normal for the town but the birth rate is high and the still birth rate is higher than it has ever been. This may be due to the fact that more births are occurring in the town and that some of the mothers having no fixed domicile the births are registered in Thetford. The prevention of still births remain a problem upon which much research is being done and slow progress maintained. The main factors in prevention are good nourishment and careful ante-natal supervision, and yet the unexplained still birth will occur.

The death rate is only slightly above that current for the whole country but half the deaths occurred in persons over 80 years of age and 5 of them were over 90 years of age. The causes of death were heart disease in 30 instances, cancer in 12 and apoplexy caused 8 of the deaths.

The health of the community has been good on the whole and there were no serious epidemics of infectious disease until towards the end of the year when whooping cough became fairly widespread amongst the child population. There was no serious epidemic of non-specific infectious disease such as I have described in previous reports as being due to dust under certain weather conditions. There were no periods of hot dry weather followed by high winds, the summer being rather damp and sultry and so favouring the rheumatic type of subhealth which cannot be called illness.

SECTION B.—GENERAL PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICES IN THE AREA.

1. (1). Personnel.

M.O.H. part time, who is also Medical Officer to the Maternity and Child Welfare Association.

Sanitary Inspector, part time, Royal Sanitary Institute.

Health Visitor, who acts as Nurse to the Infant Welfare Clinic, C.M.B., R.S.I., Health Visitors Examination, R.S.I., Maternity and Child Welfare Certificate.

District Nurse, S.R.N., C.M.B.

Town Midwife, S.R.N., C.M.B.

2. Health Services. — No change.

3. Maternity and Child Welfare.

This work has continued to be carried out by the Thetford and District Maternity and Child Welfare Association with the assistance of the town midwife who is supplied by the Norfolk Nursing Federation under the Norfolk County Council.

The Infant Welfare Clinic has been well attended throughout the year and only required to be closed once on account of whooping cough in the latter part of the year. In the last quarter an extension of this work was made by the opening of a Clinic in Croxton which was held on the last Wednesday each month. This Clinic has been much appreciated by the mothers many of whom used to attend the Thetford Clinic.

There were few serious cases of whooping cough, and no deaths in the epidemic and credit must go to your health visitor for this. She visited most of the cases and distributed the fruit juices and additional home comforts to the serious cases. One child contracted infantile paralysis which was notified back from the Norfolk and Norwich Hospital. I am glad to say the child had a very mild attack and is not permanently affected. Apparently the infection was picked up in London while visiting a relation on leave from North West Germany who may have carried the infection.

There was a slight increase in the domiciliary midwifery. But under present circumstances it is still difficult for a mother conveniently to arrange to have her confinement at home. The attendances at the Cottage Hospital Clinic were increased towards the end of the year and this was greatly due to the insistence of the midwife on having her patients seen by a doctor at least once in their pregnancy. A few post-natal examinations were carried out at the Cottage Hospital but more were made at St. Barnabas Hospital where there is more satisfactory equipment. But even at the latter hospital staffing difficulties have made it less easy to hold clinics there.

The Anti-Diphtheria Campaign has continued to be pursued by the Association and at the end of the year 64.3% of the children under 5 years of age had been inoculated against the disease. Towards the end of the year it became noticeable that arrangements were being made for the work of the local Association to be taken over by the Norfolk County Council. This should entail very little alteration in the arrangements as I consider the work of the Association to be of a very high standard and should be very satisfactory to the County Council.

The returns for the various Clinics are as follows:—

Infant Welfare Clinic.

No. of individual mothers attending	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	101
Total attendances made by these	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	417
No. of individual infants under 1 year	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	25
No. of individual infants over 1 year	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	103
No. of attendances by infants	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	229
No. of attendances by toddlers	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	263
No. of attendances by both classes	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	492
Average attendance per Clinic (children)	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	20.5
Average attendance per Clinic (mothers)	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	17.3

Hospital Ante-Natal Clinic.

No. of Ante-Natal Clinics held	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	11
No. of Post-Natal Clinics held	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	11
No. of Ante-Natal cases	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	18
No. of Ante-Natal attendances	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	21
No. of Post-Natal cases	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3
No. of Post-Natal attendances	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3

St. Barnabas Hospital Clinic.

No. of Ante-Natal cases	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	41
No. of Ante-Natal attendances	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	104
No. of Post-Natal cases	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	42
No. of Post-Natal attendances	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	192

Health Visitor's Report.

No. of First visits to new infants	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	97
No. of Visits paid to these	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1376
No. of Children over 1 year visited	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	316
No. of Visits paid to these	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1554
Total Visits made	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2930
No. of Dental cases	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	8
No. of Visits made to these	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	19
No. of Midwifery and Maternity cases taken	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3
No. of Ante-Natal cases	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	25
No. of Visits paid to these in their homes	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	26
No. of Post-Natal cases	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3
No. of Visits paid to these in their homes	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	4

4. Nursing Homes.

These are administered under the Norfolk County Council. There were three Private Nursing Homes in the Borough. At the end of the war one Nursing Home closed down.

SECTION C.—SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA.**1. (1) Water.**

No extensions to the Public Water Supply were carried out during the year.

A sample of water was submitted to the Public Analyst for Chemical and Bacteriological examination and was reported on as follows:—

“This is a pure and wholesome water of excellent bacteriological quality. It is entirely suitable for drinking and all purposes of a public supply.”

(2) Drainage and Sewerage.

There have been no alterations or extensions of this service during the year.

2. Rivers and Streams.

No action has been taken this year.

3. (1) Closet Accommodation.

The only change has been the conversion of 6 vaults to pails. This alteration gives:— W.C's. 312, Pails 645, Vaults 363.

(2) Public Cleansing.

The collection of refuse remains the same as in previous years.

(3) Sanitary Inspection of the Area.

The report of the Sanitary Inspector is as follows:—

No. of inspections of general nuisances	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	321
No. of informal notices served	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	34
No. of statutory notices served	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	Nil
No. of nuisances abated as a result of informal notices served	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	34
No. in hand at the end of the year	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3

(4) Shops and Offices.

General routine inspections carried out.

SECTION D.—HOUSING.

Limited housing routine inspections have been carried out during the year.

SECTION E.—INSPECTION & SUPERVISION OF FOOD.**(a) Milk Supply.**

As in previous years samples were taken and tested by lactometer.

(b) Meat and other Foods.

A fair amount of meat and other foods have been examined during the year resulting in the following being condemned as unfit for human consumption:— Meats 7 lbs., Cheese 36 lb., Lentils 47 lb., Oranges 980 lb., Carrots and Parsnips 1 ton, Corned beef 250 lbs., Oats 125 lbs., Dried fruit 24 lbs., Plums 2 tons.

SECTION F.—PREVALENCE OF AND CONTROL OF INFECTIOUS AND OTHER DISEASES.

There was comparatively little infectious disease in the Borough this year. There were 25 cases of measles in the first quarter, and whooping cough was being notified throughout the last two quarters. There were no serious cases and no deaths from infectious disease. A case of anterior poliomyelitis (infantile paralysis) was notified from the Norfolk & Norwich Hospital. On investigation it appeared that the child picked up the virus in London. There were actual epidemics in other parts of the country at the time. A case of cerebro spinal fever was notified which made a satisfactory recovery. It was noted that the 3 cases of pneumonia occurred in young persons under 40 years of age, and that one of the cases died of complication of the disease in the period subsequent to that covered by this report.

The campaign for inoculation against Diphtheria was carried on vigorously in the Borough by your health visitor and the doctors. At the close of the year 64.3% of the children under 5 years of age were inoculated. Whooping cough vaccine is available but not under the Government free inoculation scheme as it is not considered to be entirely efficient. It entails 4 infections instead of 2 as in the protection against diphtheria.

Notifications:—

Disease	Total Cases notified	No. admitted to Hospital	Deaths
Pneumonia	3	1	1
Measles	25	Nil	Nil
Whooping Cough ...	94	Nil	Nil
Cerebro Spinal Fever	1	Nil	Nil
Anterior Poliomyelitis	1	1	Nil
Puerperal Pyrexia ...	1	Nil	Nil
Ophthalmia Neonatorum	1	Nil	Nil
Erysipelas	1	Nil	Nil

Tuberculosis:—

Age Periods	New Cases				Deaths			
	Respiratory		Non-Respiratory		Respiratory		Non-Respiratory	
	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.
5	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
15	—	—	—	2	—	—	—	—
25	3	1	—	—	—	—	1	—
55	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
65	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Totals	3	1	—	2	—	—	1	—

In conclusion I must record my appreciation of the work done by your Sanitary Inspector and my thanks to him for his help during the year. He is still under staffed in his department and it is to his credit that so much work is carried out in spite of his shortage of labour.

I remain, Gentlemen,
Your obedient Servant,
T. L. OLIVER,